DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 387 FL 018 217

AUTHOR Davies, Mark
TITLE An Experiential Approach to Outdoor/Social Education with EFL Students. Academic Reports.
INSTITUTION Bell Educational Trust, Cambridge (England).
REPORT NO ISBN-1-870969-11-1
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 58p.
AVAILABLE FROM Director, Bell Educational Trust, Hillcross, Red Cross Lane, Cambridge, England CB2 2QX.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adventure Education; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Instructional Effectiveness; *Interpersonal Competence; *Outdoor Education; Private Schools; Program Descriptions; *Program Design; Rewards; Safety Education; *Second Language Programs; Student Evaluation; Student Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS *Bell School (England)

ABSTRACT

The outdoor and adventure education component of the program for non-native learners of English at the Bell School in Bath, England, was designed to develop learners' social attitudes and skills through a range of outdoor activities and classroom encounters. The discussion of this program component is divided into four sections. Section 1 provides some background on what this social education achieves in developing attitudes, communication and social skills, group attitudes and skills, and cooperation. Section 2 outlines the structure of the learning experience, including the environment, activities, process of achieving outcomes, "bonding," responsibility for learning, review, and structures and techniques used. Section 3 describes the learning sequence, including such elements as entering the learning sequence, macro and micro development, macro level organization, certification and awards, conditions for achieving aims, and group size. Finally, section 4 identifies some practical program considerations in certain activities such as canoeing and mountaineering, outlines the advantages of week-long courses, describes the "promotions evening," and discusses the activities involved in selling social education. The section concludes with brief discussions of safety and an evaluation of the program. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED320387

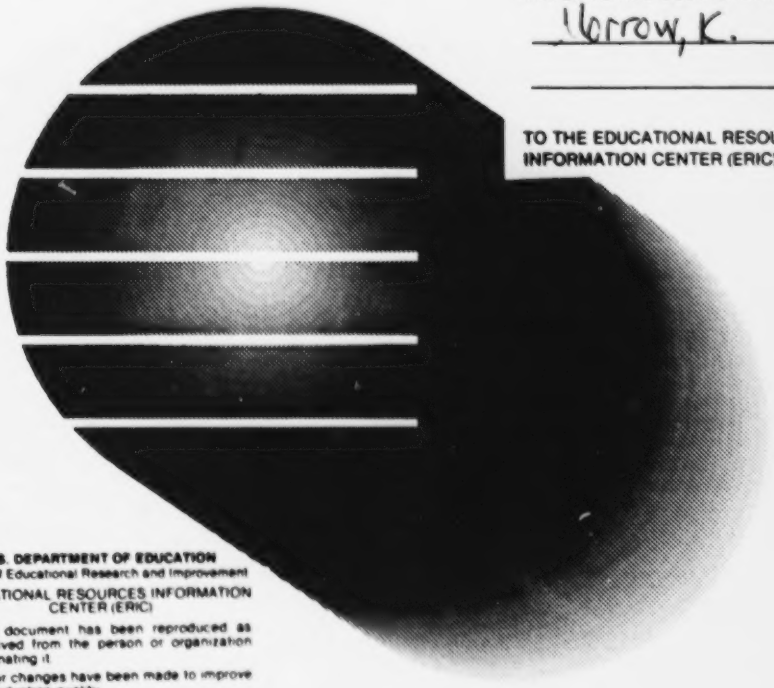
Academic Reports

An Experiential Approach to Outdoor / Social Education with EFL Students

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Morrow, K.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FL018217

The *Bell* Educational Trust

An Experiential Approach to Outdoor/ Social Education with EFL Students

Copies of this collection,
as well as other titles in the series,
can be obtained from:

Director (Education)
Bell Educational Trust
Hillscross
Red Cross Lane
Cambridge CB2 2QX

Tel: (0223) 212333
Fax: (0223) 410282
Telex: 817916 BELLCO G

Other titles in this series:

Computer Assisted Language Learning
David Eastment

Video in Action
Cynthia Leaney & Joanna Strange

An Integrated Activity Course for Juniors
John Clark

Cross-cultural INSET
John Roberts

Setting up a Course Involving Self-directed Learning
Karen Giblin & Elizabeth Spalding

The Use of Wordprocessors in EFL Teaching
Tony Hopwood

All in a Word
Alan Pulverness

An Experiential Approach to Outdoor/ Social Education with EFL Students

Mark Davies

The *Bell* Educational Trust
Hillscross
Red Cross Lane
Cambridge CB2 2QX

Tel: (0223) 212333
Fax: (0223) 410282
Telex: 817916 BELLCO G

© Bell Educational Trust 1989
ISBN 1 870969 11 1

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form
without the prior permission of the publisher.

Designed and Typeset by Simon Perfitt
Produced by Lesley Partridge

Contents

page no.

Foreword

Introduction

1 What Social Education Achieves 1

1. Attitudes. 2. Communication and Social Skills. 3. Group Attitudes and Skills. 4. Cooperation. 5. Challenges.

2 The Structure of the Learning Experience 9

Experience and Review. The Experience. The Environment. The Activity. The Process. The Experience: how Outcomes are Achieved. Skill Development. Attitude Development. A Sense of 'Bonding'. Responsibility for Learning. The Review. Structures and Techniques. The Review: how Outcomes are Achieved.

3 The Learning Sequence 27

Making Connections. Preparation for the Next Experience. Entering the Learning Sequence. Macro and Micro Level Development. Macro Level Organisation. Certification and Awards. Conditions for Achieving Aims. Group Size.

4 Practical Considerations 35

Canoeing – A Resume of What Happens. Mountaineering – A Resume of What Happens. Week-long Courses. Selling Social Eduction. Selling Activities. The Promotions Evening. A Social Experience. Safety. Evaluation.

References 47

Foreword

At first sight it may seem strange that an account of work in 'social' education is being published as part of a series of 'Academic' Reports. In fact there are two very good reasons why it is not at all out of place.

The first relates to the ethos of the educational package which is offered to students in Bell Schools. From the very earliest days, we have never taken a narrowly instrumental view of language learning and teaching. In our context it is quite clear that the vast majority of our students come to us for reasons which are not simply to do with learning the mechanics of the English language. The fact of being in England is a very significant opportunity to learn more about the 'culture' and way of life of a foreign country, and to broaden horizons; we see it as part of our responsibility to facilitate this process, and the 'social programme' has always been a crucial part of the overall pattern of activities in our schools. What Mark Davies describes in this report, however, goes beyond the conventional notion of the social programme as a set of passive 'tourist' events; he shows instead how out-of-class activities can be organised to give students genuinely educational insights into their own capacities and the ways in which they can relate to other people. That, then, is one reason why this report is 'academic'; it deals with an educational area.

The second reason is methodological. The approach which Mark reports is 'experiential', based on a principled methodology of structured learning through and from direct experience. The rationale and description of the application of this approach is for me one of the most valuable aspects of this report. What makes it even more interesting is the clear applicability of this approach to more conventional language teaching in the classroom. In the Bath school particularly there is a history of interest in experiential methods (see *Cross-Cultural INSET* for Language Teachers by John Roberts in this series and 'Dear Brown Eyes' by Graham Carter and Howard Thomas in *ELTJ* 40/3 July 1986). What Mark

describes here is in a very real sense the breaking down of the classroom walls and the integration of 'social' and 'EFL' activities within a coherent educational framework.

I would like to thank all those who have worked so hard to establish the atmosphere in which the ideas reported here could take root and flourish. In this sense particular thanks are due to Steve Walters, the Principal of the Bell School, Bath, and to Howard Thomas, the Director of Studies. But they would be the first to recognise that educational innovation and development can only take place in an atmosphere of co-operation to which the whole staff contribute.

Above all, thanks are due to Stefanie Duncan for her help in typing up Mark's manuscript – and, of course, to Mark. I know that on occasions he would much rather have been climbing Snowdon barefoot than writing this report; but the challenge has been well and truly met. That's experiential learning!

Keith Morrow
Director (Education)
The Bell Educational Trust

February 1989

Introduction

Since early 1986 the educational aspect of the social programme at the Bell School Bath has grown in importance. It was at this time that ideas current in other settings, those of residential youth work and educational drama, were introduced into a new framework for the programme. What these ideas represent is a concept of social education which had previously received little attention in the social programme of the school.

This new addition to the programme constitutes a third area alongside the existing two:

1. The 'academic' tourist – excursions to sites of interest to the tourist with an emphasis on sightseeing and photo opportunities.

2. Entertainment and relaxation – parties and video film shows.

3. Social education – the development of attitudes and skills by means of a range of outdoor activities and classroom encounters.

Social education is thus rooted in a directly experiential model of learning. The importance and implications of this approach will become clearer later.

Section 1:

What Social Education Achieves

1. Attitudes

The social programme offers a collection of challenging opportunities from whitewater canoeing to participating in special interest meetings organised by English people at the school. Students are encouraged to participate in these and to reflect on the new insights the challenges give them. The gains can be summarised thus:

(a) Students are noticeably more motivated. No sooner have they participated in one challenging activity than they want to participate in another. They develop an 'appetite' for challenges, moving, for example, from canoeing on one occasion to caving the next. Students become more motivated not only to pursue challenges in the social programme but to pursue challenges in other areas of their lives. Students quickly become involved in planning their weekend tours with other students and in finding ways to meet and talk with English people. The students find themselves more involved in independent decision making and in committing themselves to ideas.

(b) The students find they are learning more. In feeling more motivated to take on personal challenges they define their own goals, work out ways of achieving them, and then put their ideas into practice. The students take more responsibility for their own learning and find themselves having a more satisfying and fulfilling time while they are here.

(c) Students interact more freely and relate more easily to one another. They increase their repertoire of communication/social skills and learn to communicate more effectively.

(d) Students enjoy themselves more.

(e) Students adopt a more responsible role towards the school and their broader social lives.

(f) Perhaps most important of all is that students enthuse about the activities, their friends, and themselves. They develop an urgent need to communicate and a more deeply felt need to learn English.

2. Communication and Social Skills

Through structured activities students develop skills. These skills are of two kinds: sensory-motor skills, such as being able to canoe in a straight line; and communication and social skills. The kinds of communication and social skills that are developed depend on the kind of learning process or ability the activity is structured towards achieving. On the one hand these skills might include finding ways to give positive feedback, while on the other, they might be to initiate friendships or to manage time more effectively.

What students take away with them is:

- a knowledge of what the skills and processes are
- a knowledge of how to perform the skills
- the ability to perform them to some extent.

The skills and abilities that are developed through these activities are usually accompanied by a range of associated behaviour which in part reflects the complex interrelationship which skills have with one another. This associated range of behaviour includes:

- greater fluency and expression in verbal and non verbal behaviour along with greater self-confidence

- greater understanding of the communication process and varied use of communication strategies
- the acquisition of a vocabulary to describe the processes and abilities which are being learned simultaneously with the language.

3. Group Attitudes and Skills

Students participating in these activities extend their appreciation and awareness of how their achievements are affected by the group of which they are a part. They notice that the group is an 'interdependent organism' which can be encouraged, through their support, to attempt more challenging goals and to achieve a clearer understanding between people. This appreciation and awareness is developed with respect to four outcomes in particular.

Group Skills

These are communication/social skills that students identify as being useful for the success of the group. These skills range from being able to maintain a sense of humour ('when all around are losing theirs'), to thinking more about the needs of the group at moments when everyone else is more concerned with thinking about needs of their own.

'Bonding'

A sense of 'bonding' is to some extent an incidental outcome of all shared experience. During these activities however, 'bonding' is also an intentional outcome. Students sense a different achievement than friendship alone. They sense a strong feeling of belonging to the same social group.

Understanding Group Processes

Through the development of appropriate lexical fields students are more able to describe, review and influence group processes. Concepts such as 'contract' and 'leadership' enter into the students' everyday language, and develop through it.

Synergy

As students participate in these activities they are encouraged to find their success as part of the success of the new group they have joined. They view their participation in terms of 'what is the most effective contribution I can make to the group's success' and not in terms of 'who will benefit most or least from this contribution'. They feel the success of the group is important because they see the success of the group as being greater than the sum of its parts. Synergy is expressed as an attitude students have towards the group rather than a set of rules that can be identified as making the group more effective.

4. Cooperation

As students work towards each task, as a group problem solving activity, their level of success is influenced by the degree to which the group is working cooperatively. Achieving greater cooperation between students enables them to draw on the security of the group and to share experiences. In this way students channel their competitive energies into building on others' experience, extending themselves and achieving group goals. Greater cooperation enables students to learn more easily from one another and provides an essential ingredient in the development of group synergy. Competition is not excluded from the process of learning completely but it is not seen as the basis for it.

Placing a greater emphasis on cooperation rather than competition characterises the approach adopted towards these activities in the social programme. The contrast between competition and cooperation is suggested below.

Emphasising Competition	Emphasising Cooperation
Activities are seen as an end in themselves with the stress on achieving a high standard.	Activities seen as a vehicle for group development.
Reviewing, frequently called debriefing looks at activities in terms of how well students coped.	Reviewing concentrates on group processes e.g. how people feel, how much positive feedback they give to one another.
Students thrown in at the deep end.	Students set own levels of challenge.
Instructors direct students.	Tutors seen as facilitators. Staff open to group's criticism.

These differences in emphasis between the 'Outward Bound' type approach and the social education approach do not preclude aspects of either being present in both. They do, however, give the work an orientation which the tutor needs to follow if he/she is to use it to bring about those outcomes set out above.

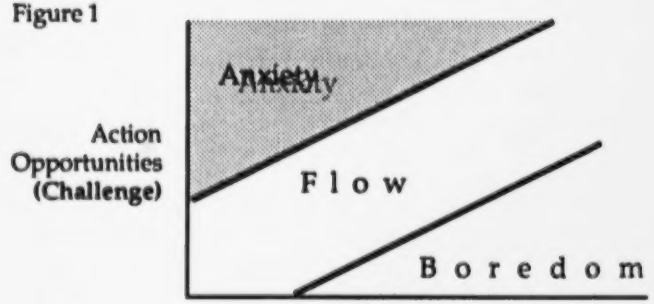
5. Challenges

Within each task there is the potential for students to extend the challenges they give themselves and a need for the tutor to encourage challenges that can be realistically achieved. The development of the concept of challenge with students begins in the activities of the social programme and forms a basis for independent application by students in everyday life.

The idea of personal challenge is one that is easily grasped by students as they participate in activities. They notice that as they increase their level of skill and confidence they become more adventurous and go on to choose challenges which demand more from them. This idea of developing challenges works well so long as students understand that successful outcomes require a balance between the skills an individual possesses and the challenge they give themselves. In this way a group of students, whatever their ability, can explore their potential on an equal footing with one another.

The relationship between skills and challenge has been expressed diagrammatically as shown in Fig. 1 below.

Figure 1

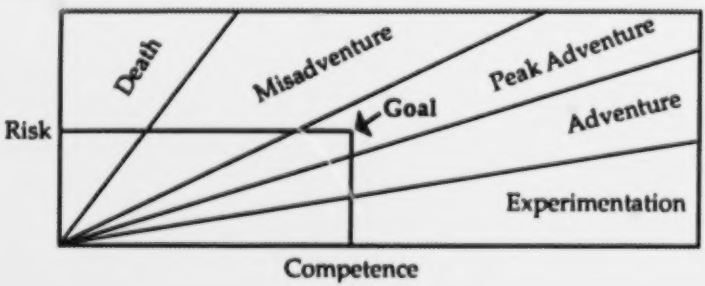


(Csikszentmihalyi: 1975)

In Fig. 1 Csikszentmihalyi helps identify a tension that exists between anxiety and boredom. The more skill a person has the more they move from a condition of anxiety to boredom, unless of course they give themselves a challenge which keeps step with their increase in skill. It is this balance between challenge and skill that enables students to work together in the most productive way.

Csikszentmihalyi's ideas were put together recently with those of Mortlock and Ellis in an attempt to apply the 'adventure experience' to a similar kind of model. In doing so they provided a model that made sense in terms of communication/social skills and personal challenges, as well as the intended activity skills and adventure type challenges. For this reason, as well as the comparative lack of informed discussion about social education and outdoor education, these ideas are particularly helpful (see Fig. 2 below).

Figure 2



Risk is defined as the potential to lose something of value, which may be mental, physical, emotional or a combination of all three.

Competence is defined as the ability of individuals to deal effectively with the demands placed on them, drawing on skill, attitudes, knowledge, experience and behaviour.

With perhaps the obvious exception of death the adventure experience paradigm works well for challenges, whatever they are.

Adventure: At this level the tutor tends to work on extending skills. The challenge is pitched at a level where with effort the student can overcome it, and not face any physical/mental/ emotional harm should there be a mistake.

Peak Adventure: At this level the tutor tends to work on developing attitudes. There is a feeling that at this level the challenge can be overcome only with a considerable amount of effort (and luck), and that the possibility of physical, mental and emotional harm is always present.

Section 2:

The Structure of the Learning Experience

Experience and Review

The 'experience' and the 'review' form the essential parts around which all experiential learning is structured. It is these interrelated processes that enable the aims to be achieved.

The Experience

What constitutes the 'experience' in the experience is the interreaction that takes place between the student, the environment and the group.

The Environment

The environment facilitates the kind of educational experience that differs in two important respects from that of the more conventional educational environment: the classroom. Firstly the activity is seen as a real activity with real consequences. It is neither a simulated event used for learning purposes, nor an experience that can be taken superficially by the student. In deciding to take these activities the students present themselves with demanding challenges set by the environment. This 'environment' might refer to bad weather, a 70m precipice, or perhaps other members of the group. Secondly the activity

presents students with tasks which need to be completed (there is no bell signalling the end of lessons on the top of Snowdon.)

The environment setting the challenge provides students with a trigger for their imagination. It asks questions about what is unknown to the student and which no one else can answer. In a communications workshop this question might be expressed as 'what do I tell others about myself that I am unaware of?' or while caving it might be 'what do I do if I can't go any further and can't turn back?' In both these cases there is a problem of meaning that sets the challenge in the minds of the students. The resolution of these 'tensions' comes about through a creative problem solving process in which new insights are developed.

The Activity

Every activity provides a main task that needs to be accomplished, or, expressed another way, every activity has a purpose. This 'main' task is composed of many tasks, each of these is a structured opportunity for the group to achieve those outcomes desired by the tutor. Within the 'main' task of reaching a mountain summit might be included the traverse of a snowy ridge. This task presents a challenge and a problem to solve, the group has to find a way of getting everyone across safely. This is a structured opportunity. It has been introduced intentionally to encourage the group to work together cooperatively.

Each structured opportunity/task is a 'happening' for the student, one that the tutor has carefully avoided revealing in advance. Whilst the tutor has a responsibility for ensuring that the students are fully prepared in equipment terms to meet the main task they have set out to achieve, and are psychologically predisposed to achieving it, he or she also has the responsibility to ensure that the happenings en-route remain open to discovery and imagination. In this way the tutor engages students in the process of creative problem solving. It is clearly not to the

students' advantage to be told 'what will happen next' and 'what will need to be done', as this creates passive learners. It only creates a situation where the tutor achieves the task for the students, denying them the experience of creative problem solving and of growing in self-confidence by overcoming the challenge for themselves.

Structured opportunities/tasks are developed and planned by the tutor in the pre-experience and review phase as well as 'as it happens'. Because of this there is a need for the tutor to withhold some information from the student in preparation of the experience as well as during it. This not only encourages the students to participate as active learners but ensures that the whole group is receptive to unplanned challenges such as hill fog or rivers in full spate after heavy rain.

The Process

These structured opportunities/tasks achieve outcomes as processes. While the development of sensory-motor skills such as canoe strokes might also be a desired outcome (since it may contribute to student self-confidence), for the main part they are not the primary concern of the activity. In both indoor activities such as communication workshops and outdoor activities such as canoeing, skills and attitudes are developed as a means to an end. This 'end' is the resolution of the problem located in the task.

In developing outcomes as processes simulated problem solving events along the lines of 'here is a rope and plank, now get out of that' are sometimes used by tutors. There is no doubt a value for this in assessment work, and in going some way to achieving the outcomes we have identified. For the most part however, social education is about real consequences and these are developed most directly from real tasks. As such the simulated approach is not then a component of social education as applied in the social programme.

In every activity the tutor sets about emphasising a particular aspect of the process. The tutor might wish to encourage either the

development of a particular communication and social or sensory-motor type skill, or the development of a particular attitude, or a combination of both. With canoeing, for example, the tutor might choose to develop water confidence and a positive attitude towards the activity, rather than work towards developing actual paddling skills or communication skills. In this case it is possible that the canoeing group would face many challenges and never set their hands on a paddle.

The Experience: how Outcomes are Achieved

Through the pre-experience and review phases students are encouraged towards a broader appreciation and awareness of developing attitudes and skills. These 'induction' phases may be concerned with the development of skills and abilities such as active listening, group skills or positive feedback. Alternatively, they may be concerned with the development of attitudes such as a responsibility towards others. This can be seen in a winding down period at a drama workshop where the group focuses their attention on those aspects of the improvisation that contributed to its success. Interpreting experience with reference to these concepts and systematising knowledge through these activities, is the process by which relevant concepts are given broader meaning by the students. It is through these pre-experience and review phases that the terms of reference which help structure student attitudes towards the experience are developed.

The 'experience' on the other hand is not about developing an appreciation and awareness of attitudes and skills, it is about the direct development of these attitudes and skills. In a drama workshop or while caving students meet challenges by doing and by finding out as they go along. During the experience phase the tutor is involved in exploring these opportunities with the students. Working from within the group the tutor looks for ways to develop attitudes and extend skills. His or her involvement in the 'experience' develops along three lines: developing the

opportunities for personal challenge within the task (and encouraging students to do the same); giving emphasis to the particular process or ability that they intend to develop; and controlling the levels of risk.

Skill Development

The tutor acts as a facilitator for skill development by encouraging students to reflect on skills such as speaking skills or leadership skills as the opportunities arise. The tutor extends leadership of this process to the students by encouraging them to provide each other with informal and positive feedback on the encounters occurring. In this way the tutor and the group identify and reinforce a wide range of skills during the activity.

In taking the role of facilitator the tutor is careful to avoid any overt involvement along the lines of 'now let's sit down and find out what we can learn from this'. This is structured reflection of the kind characterised by the review and is not introduced during the experience.

Encouraging students to give one another greater feedback as a matter of course and not only when the presence of the tutor reminds them, is an essential feature of skill development. It plays a major role in creating an environment where students feel more secure in relation to one another and yet gain a greater sense of personal freedom within the group. As this sense of personal freedom and security grows, they feel more able to experiment, practise and reflect on their abilities within the group. These conditions encourage a growing immediacy of response amongst group members. Students feel more able to make communicative and social errors and learn from them away from any threat of evaluation. It is through the reciprocal action and response students make to one another that they move beyond what is known to them, extending their abilities to more complex levels of skill.

This reciprocal action and response is prompted to a significant extent by the nature of the task the students have given themselves. As they set about meeting challenges they find that they need to use one another's strengths to an increasing extent. They find that they need to draw on these strengths with an increasing frequency and need to be able to rely on the fact that they can continue to do so. Only by finding out and reinforcing one another's strengths can the students hope to meet challenges successfully.

In an activity such as canoeing, this process can be seen clearly. As students reach the point at which they have almost mastered a skill like, say, rolling their canoes, they become increasingly animated. There is a sense of urgency in their conversations and they start putting more effort into trying to correct their own and others' mistakes. But these animated conversations take place in response to social as well as communicative needs. As students demand more from themselves and others they need to maintain a workable relationship with one another. In meeting those needs students continually adapt, extend and develop their communicative and social skills.

The outcome of this canoe session might be that the students are able to roll their canoes with varying degrees of proficiency. This outcome however will only be seen to be successful if the students have enjoyed themselves and felt some degree of satisfaction and fulfilment at having achieved a positive social outcome to the session as well.

Attitude Development

Attitude development is a process of choosing to take up challenges like, say, climbing and coming to know intuitively what it's like to do them. This 'knowledge' is developed through students exposing themselves to challenges, which are orientated towards encouraging particular kinds of outcomes. The challenge

of climbing enables students to feel an increased sense of responsibility for their own actions and within this to develop a strong sense of trust in the person belaying the rope.

One process that enables the development of attitudes is intrapersonal reflection. It is through this that the concepts students are exposed to during the pre-experience and review phases are given meaning. Coming to know what it is like to do an activity involves students becoming aware of seemingly irrational feelings such as 'if the rope will hold me, why am I scared to death it won't?' It is during these moments when the student is 'standing' on the very edge of what is known, that intuitive knowledge is gained. By encouraging students to be more aware of their intuition, and by developing this awareness with respect to desired outcomes such as trusting others or self responsibility, the tutor enables students to be more aware of and to develop valuable intuitive knowledge, the kind of knowledge that directs actions and enables a change in attitudes.

A second process also involved in the development of attitudes is that of interpersonal reflection. It is through this that the meaning given to concepts develops during the activity. It is also a way that students come to know what it is like to do an activity. Students encourage each other to draw specific moments of awareness from the general confusion of sensations. The group wants to know what it feels like to do a particular climbing route, what advice they can take on safety and on the hidden challenges that only reveal themselves as the task progresses. This interpersonal reflection enables students to inform others of their circumstances and in doing so to be an audience to their own situation. It enables them to increase their awareness of and develop valuable intuitive knowledge, while pursuing the activity.

Through reflection, feelings become known and understanding is developed. Intrapersonal and inter-personal reflection are interrelated and parallel processes which result in a change in attitude on the part of the student.

After the course, when I arrived home, I felt stirred, moved in some way. I thought things aren't in the right place any more. The things I did without thinking about - people, friends, my work and my future, these sorts of things.

A Swiss student

A Sense of 'Bonding'

Through these emotionally demanding activities the group develops a strong sense of 'bonding'. This 'bonding' is developed within shared experience, unlike the review, where it is developed through language alone. This sense of 'bonding' has a feeling of permanence about it and is created by the shared significance the activity has for its participants.

I understand only simple words and sentences. I don't understand complicated words and sentences but I have been able to understand how people feel and to share my closest feelings with them. I got to know them at a level of feeling.

A Japanese student

Responsibility for Learning

Within the experience students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for extending their skills and for developing personal challenges. Students do this by choosing the extent of their own challenges; setting challenges that can be realistically achieved within the group, and developing challenge as a concept with which to discuss their lives outside the social programme. In the final analysis however, no matter how much support the tutor and group may give, it is the extent to which each student makes use of the opportunities available, that decides the pace at which they develop a greater responsibility for learning.

Through the pre-experience, experience and review phases changes in attitudes and skills are developed with one ambition in mind. This ambition is to develop the students' responsibility for improving their own learning and for doing so from everyday experiences. The tutor does this by setting in motion the habit of reflective thinking and an ownership of change on the part of the students.

The Review

A degree of reflection is the process that most people engage in after pursuing a demanding activity. The difference between this everyday process and the review, is that the review is a structured process. It uses structures and techniques introduced by a tutor to guide students towards those aspects of experience that the tutor feels will lead to the development of worthwhile outcomes. This structuring of reflection in the form of a review develops intended outcomes and in doing so distinguishes itself from the incidental achievements associated with unstructured reflection. The review develops the educational side of these activities and in doing so draws them apart from leisure pursuits and other activities that are an end in themselves.

> *Normally you live your life routinely, you never look back at what you have done and felt during the day. Through the review I realised I had done a lot of good things I hadn't thought about. I have never done this before, I hadn't realised I had done so much.*
>
> A Swiss student

The review has two main purposes: it is concerned with enabling students to recognise and clarify what they did, felt and found out; and is concerned with enabling the group to build on what was learnt and develop it in preparation for the next experience. As a process it looks back to what was done, and forwards to what is to happen next.

Structures and Techniques

The structures and techniques used for the review help students to enter more fully into the process, and enhance the quality of reviewing taking place.

These structures and techniques are typically used for one of two main purposes. Firstly (and most importantly) they are a means of directing questions towards those aspects of student experience that can be usefully applied to future situations. In this way these questions develop a heightened sense of awareness in students about the attitudes and skills that they and others own.

Secondly, they are used as a means of processing information in a way which relates to the particular purpose at hand. This purpose might be recording the information in a linguistic form to be documented at a later stage, or, alternatively, it might concern clarifying issues which emerged in the group during the day.

We will now look at some of the examples of the structures and techniques used.

1. Faces

These faces (like the one opposite) are enlarged to A4 size. They are introduced informally during a lull in the day's programmed activities.

- The faces are circulated amongst the group. Everyone scribes a mood or sentiment to a face, writing it anywhere on the card. Each student tries to write at least one word or phrase to each picture. Some of these words and phrases will need to be explained to members of the group by those that wrote them. This 'feeling word-bank' is then put up on the wall and used for students to refer to in their own time, take notes, and become part of the 'topical' language used during the activity period.

- These faces are now used to structure future reviews. One way in which they might be used is to encourage students to find a feeling on a picture that captures a moment they will remember a long time after the activity has finished. Students then communicate the feeling or encounter that took place to the chief scribe, who puts the information up on a flip chart to be developed further.

- This information is then processed by the students under the guidance of the tutor. The tutor phrases questions so as to encourage students to share particular kinds of information, and at the same time emphasises linguistic structures that the information can be held together with.

'One challenge for me today was ...' - to X
- X-ing
- when I X-ed.

2. Journals

Journals are A5 sized booklets organised in two parts. The first part contains information the students may need to draw on over the period of the course. In the case of a 1-week outdoor education course in Snowdonia, this information concerns weather, safety, farming, tourism, and glaciation in the Snowdonia National Park. It also looks at the Welsh Language and gives an insight into the week's schedule of activities. The second part of the book is arranged in a diary format with two pages available to each day. On each page there are two questions which relate to the days activities and the review.

These are used as a record of personal experience rather than for the purpose of language correction. Such is the confidential nature of these journals that students feel they can record the more meaningful parts of the day's experience without any threat of evaluation by anyone else. These journals are filled in after each review.

> *When I see my journal I will always think, 'We did this, we saw this, we shared this experience!' I will never forget this. I did this with people I trust and feel very close to.*
>
> A Japanese student

3. Review Guide

The review guide takes the form of a sheet of questions and incomplete statements. It is used by the tutor to develop an appreciation and awareness of what took place within each students experience of the activity. These questions and incomplete statements open up discussions into student attitudes and their ability to express themselves as individuals. An example of an incomplete statement that might be put to students from this guide is 'Someone I would like to say thank you to today is ....'

This information is written up on a flip chart and the group

encouraged to identify those words and phrases they think are the most expressive or that communicate meanings that they feel they can share. These are then underlined by the group and drawn on as a resource in further discussions.

4. Communication Exercises

These are imaginative and enjoyable workshop activities which involve the students giving each other feedback of a kind relating to the particular communication skills that are being developed.

This activity is frequently used to develop an appreciation and awareness of group strengths. Student observations are put up on the wall and become a model to build on, often being developed in future reviews. This is an example of a kind of technique that is concerned mainly with looking forward to what will happen next.

5. Self Grid

As part of the review students identify what they feel they have learnt from the activities. A typical list will include items such as personal challenge, positive strokes and hard work. Students then work out how they can contextualise these items, a process which involves a great deal of debate. As part of this debate students draw together concepts such as 'blind spot' and in doing so extend their understanding of the communication process. The idea of putting these concepts into a grid is to make it easier for the students to make the connection between what they have learnt and the broader application it has to their everyday lives. (See Fig. 3.)

Public Me	Private Me
Blind Spot	Potential

Figure 3

Public Me and Blind Spot: Students find that using this grid helps them find out more about one another and so feel more secure in relation to one another. In terms of outcomes the grid is used in developing communication skills, group skills and 'bonding'.

Potential: It asks questions about how we feel, and where we think our challenges lie.

Private Me: This is the world of phobias, fears and sensations that are shared by the group through 'levelling' experiences.

It tends to be the case that the more confident the tutor is with the structures and techniques, the greater the fluency of its application and the greater the variety of applications it can have. This is a process requiring the tutor to think about ways of adapting structures and techniques that he or she uses regularly in other areas of work, as well as finding new structures and techniques and trying to adapt them.

Any perspective that suggests structures and techniques alone accomplish the review, is telling only half the story. The skills and judgements of the tutor in using these structures and techniques have a significant bearing on whether the outcome is successful or not. This is especially the case when encouraging students to elaborate on how they felt during an activity. The tutor has to guide the review, taking direction in part from incompletely expressed thoughts or hints of undisclosed observations, without prying. He or she has to be seen by the students as unobtrusively enquiring into areas of shared experience. It tends to be the case that a relaxed attitude towards working with groups, along with speculative questioning, is one of the most successfully used strategies for reviewing.

The Review: how Outcomes are Achieved

The structures and techniques used by the tutor are backed up by an understanding of why they are to be used. Are they to be used to find out about group strengths, or to discuss group issues which need to be looked at? Whatever the area to be explored by the tutor, he or she uses these structures and techniques to raise questions about the student's personal experience and sense of self. At the same time the tutor taps a need expressed by the students to share their experience with others.

A Need to Communicate

The 'real tasks' that students review add a sense of significance to the sharing of experience. The need to know what will happen if I get stuck under my canoe is replaced in the review by the need to share what happened when I got stuck under the canoe. By drawing on a student's emotional as well as physical and intellectual experience, the review creates a strongly felt need to communicate in English, and a strongly felt need to learn it. This need is not restricted to the period of the review, but permeates all activity the student is engaged in.

> *When I arrived back in the evening I was so tired I couldn't speak. Then I found I couldn't stop speaking. I was talking for three hours. I did so much talking I couldn't think for myself. Then I decided to write it all down.*
>
> A Swiss student

Language

This sharing of experience is parallelled by the intentional development of language, as part of the review. As students interpret and clarify their own and others' experiences they

become involved in the process of trying to find appropriate words and phrases. In the search for these words and phrases, students find that the thoughts they are searching for reveal themselves. In the act of expressing these thoughts the students fully understand themselves what they are trying to say. These words and phrases develop as a result of sharing experience and trying to learn from it. The search for language begins with the search for meaning itself.

> *Here language is alive, we are involved in feeling, speaking, thinking and listening. I need to understand others and they need to understand me. In this way I find I am learning to feel the language.*
>
> A Mozambique student

Developing an Appreciation and Awareness of Skills and Attitudes

This is a process of resolving questions about personal experience and takes the form of a group problem solving and consciousness raising activity. This activity proceeds on a similar basis to that of the experience by drawing on the close interrelationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection.

Intrapersonal reflection is the process students go through of recalling and interpreting all kinds of sense impressions from their experience. This process is reflexive, meeting a need by the students to interpret one another's experience to help inform their own understanding of what took place.

Through interpersonal reflection students provide feedback on what they felt, found out and did (and which others may have been unaware of), and receive feedback on others' perception of their situations of which the student may have been unaware. In doing this students present themselves with differing definitions of the situation that they had considered.

Through interpreting and sharing experience students move beyond what is known to them and are compelled to form new perceptions. In this way an appreciation and awareness of the skills and attitudes is developed.

In sharing feelings everyone wanted to make an effort to understand one another. I found out from this, what is meant by listening and speaking, it's something you never really learn at school. It demands you put yourself in the other person's shoes.

A Swiss student

Group Skills, Group Processes, 'Bonding' and Synergy

The review is the chief means by which students develop an appreciation and awareness of group skills, an understanding of group processes, a sense of 'bonding' and group synergy.

Through the review students develop an understanding of their interdependence with the larger group. Students notice that by building on each other's strengths the group becomes more successful. The review encourages this outcome in four ways.

1. The review is concerned with developing words and phrases with which students can describe group processes. Students notice how being able to discuss issues in terms of, say 'contracts' enables them to participate more effectively in the group to achieve satisfactory outcomes. Developing words and phrases is about improving the accuracy and completeness of conceptual structures which makes each student's participation in the group more effective.

2. The acquisition of a vocabulary to describe feelings plays a major role in creating a sense of 'bonding'. Being able to express experiences as emotional encounters has a levelling effect in the

group, it helps unlock feelings of empathy and strengthens a common bond between students.

I felt like I belonged to a group in a way I can't remember experiencing before. We really tried to understand one another and built up a strong feeling of unity.

A Mozambique student

3. Through the review personal strengths are encouraged to be seen as group strengths. A good listener might find that they can play a useful role in helping the group to clarify its objectives or to offer sensitive and effective help to those facing personal challenges.

4. Through understanding more about group processes, extending group skills and developing a sense of bonding students begin achieving synergistic outcomes. Students are less concerned about the differences that separate them and more concerned to act on the fact that the success of the group is important.

Being closer together means we got more out of the week, we found it easier to share our experiences and to learn from them.

A Japanese student

Section 3:

The Learning Sequence

The relationship between experience and review forms a basis from which learning takes place and from which social education is developed. This relationship is illustrated in Fig 4. below.

reflection → A process of individual and group development

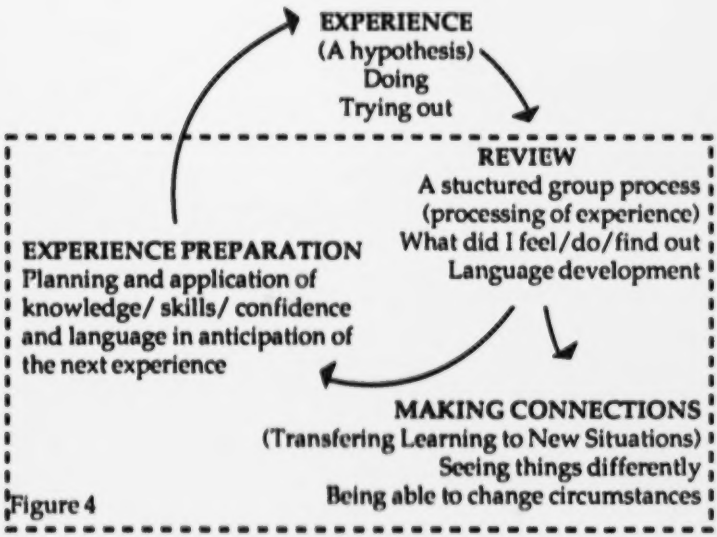


Figure 4

- Reflection is a continual process of consciousness raising 'as things happen'.
- Each phase builds on what went before in a purposeful way.

Making Connections

This is a continual process of relating the learning that takes place to the broader social environment of the student's life. It's about doing, feeling and knowing how I will apply who I am to future situations, and about introducing an appreciation and awareness of the broader social context into the present learning environment. In this phase the tutor moves the reflection or review as naturally as possible towards enabling students to notice changes in their own perceptions of the world.

> *Last night we thought how can we make life a bit more like it was on this course. You say, 'No! It can't go on like before.' I have found out a lot, it's going to be good for me when I get back to work in the village where I live.*
>
> A Swiss student

It tends to be the case with the long weekend and week-long activities that students share a strong orientation towards making connections. The tutor most frequently takes the role of helping them focus their attention, clarify their perceptions and of encouraging everyone to participate. In instances where the desire to make connections is not forthcoming the tutor might take a more active role in helping them focus their attention on the parallels of their activity experience to their everyday lives.

Preparation for the Next Experience

Building on what was felt, found out and done, during review and reflection, occurs at two easily identifiable levels. Firstly there are 'public' needs such as 'what equipment do we need', 'who will get it', 'carry it', 'check it over', and so on. Then there are the 'private' needs such as eliciting feedback on the new state of relationships

for learning within the group. These might be motivated by concerns such as, 'is X unhappy' or 'I am not able to join in with the group very much.' The opportunity to satisfy these needs might be met on the one hand by students organising a planning meeting, and on the other hand by an impromptu fun session such as inventing the Bell School National Anthem in the back of the minibus. The phases of preparing for the next experience and making connections both develop logically as part of the review.

Entering the Learning Sequence

It is usually the case that groups enter the learning sequence at the pre-experience and experience phases, although they could just as easily begin at any other point. A short canoe session would allow the tutor to develop the concept of personal challenge, and an awareness of a change in attitude on the part of the students. The subsequent mountaineering weekend excursion may then develop from the review phase for these students, where the meeting to discuss the weekend draws heavily on what they felt and found out by challenging themselves to learn to canoe.

Macro and Micro Level Development

The process of phased development occurs in the learning sequence at two levels. At the micro level of minute by minute interaction the tutor is involved in the process of experience and review with the students. At the macro level the tutor is concerned with the week by week planning of student experience. At this level the tutor develops the course structure and prepares the human and material resources necessary to meet anticipated student needs. As both these contexts interrelate and affect one another the tutor is continually aware of both in his/her work.

Macro Level Organisation

In taking a macro level view of the social programme, activities can be seen to be organised as a cumulative learning process rather than as a series of isolated and uncoordinated interactive experiences. Within the social programme, activities frequently culminate in considerable challenges of one kind or another. Students might give themselves the challenge of being able to canoe on rapids, of being able to roll a canoe, of completing a hill walking expedition, or perhaps of being able to swim. These goals provide students with an opportunity to put together the skills and confidence they have developed from the many spheres of activity that form the social programme. In this way students give themselves challenges which result in considerable personal achievement.

Certification and Awards

In a cumulative programme students achieve a great deal in terms of skill, knowledge and experience. Unfortunately most students find that the only evidence they have to show prospective employers or friends of what they have achieved (apart from the qualities that are self-evident about themselves), is in the form of photographs they have taken. It is with this in mind that the Outdoor Education Course developed its own form of certification. These certificates list the activities students complete and avoid suggesting that some students have been more successful than others, and by implication are better people. In line with the ethos of the course, participation in itself is seen as worthy of merit.

There are, of course, opportunities for students to participate in award schemes which enable them to achieve nationally recognised certificates. While these schemes such as the

Swimming Teachers Awards are individual events, they do offer the potential for development as a group activity and a vehicle for learning.

It is also worth pointing out that certificates are not the only 'tangible' evidence of student achievement. Students also pursue considerable personal challenges in a variety of different activities from photography to craftwork. These activities are pursued through evening classes at local colleges or through community facilities, all producing an end product.

It is this sequential development running through the social programme, both in terms of the opportunities for developing skills and changing attitudes, as well as in terms of the 'tangible' end products, that helps give each activity its relevance. It is the relevance these activities have for the students that makes them a continually accessible resource for learning in the more academic sphere of student school life.

Conditions for Achieving Aims

A climate for social learning is an essential component of all activities. It is this that enables students to invest emotionally in the learning process and allows for a degree of spontaneity that enables them to engage intuitively in challenging and modifying their own and others perceptions. The tutor contributes substantially to this 'climate' for social learning in the following ways.

1. Enabling the group to work in ways which affirm peoples value and potential. One way this is achieved is by encouraging the giving and receiving of feedback that is both positive and genuinely felt. The purpose of this is to introduce mutual trust and support further into the groups actions.

2. Being a member of the group and not its leader. This does not diminish the responsibility for safety or the success of the activity on the part of the tutor. Adopting such a profile is necessary for many reasons, but, most importantly, to encourage the group to set the 'rules' and conditions (as far as is appropriate) for all the group to participate, and generally make it easier for the tutor to work with the group to achieve the kinds of outcomes desired.

3. Joining in fully with all the activities, alongside the students. Seeing the tutor as a learner helps defeat student expectations of a 'teacher/evaluator' role within the group. Part of this involves the tutor being prepared to share feelings in an honest way with students. Participating in 'the experience' also helps to inform the tutor in a qualitative way about the value and potential of different activities, and develops an appreciation of the situation that helps with developing the review.

4. Being an enthusiastic person and fun to be with.

5. Being able to work in a genuinely supportive capacity within the group. This includes a flexible style of role taking and a continuing concern for what is happening to others.

6. Being dedicated and committed, 24 hours a day, to achieving the kinds of outcomes desired. This is not developed as a form of self-discipline (doing what is required day or night), but is a manifestation of a more personally held philosophy in the value and practice of social education.

7. Choosing/rearranging the physical environment in which the review takes place to communicate an openness and warmth. Sitting 'in the round' illuminated by a pool of light has distinct advantages over a room lit by bright fluorescent lights. In a similar way, reviewing in the minibus after canoeing has advantages over reviewing in a noisy and distracting changing room!

8. Creating the learning environment in which students begin to 'gel' as a group usually requires the tutor to adopt a high profile role at the beginning of an activity or course. From the outset, however, the tutor works at withdrawing from this position and enabling the group to take as many of the responsibilities for keeping the learning environment going. This enables the tutor to catalyse, facilitate, guide and influence the group with the minimum of apparent intervention.

Group Size

The ability of groups to work cohesively and enter the learning process as fully as they might is in part a function of the group's size. The larger the number in the group, the greater the structure and differentiation of roles. The smaller the number in the group, the more fluid the leadership and the less organisation is necessary for all students to participate (and to participate to a much greater extent).

What counts as the most effective group size varies according to the skills and attitudes students bring to working cooperatively. In terms of the different kinds of activity taking place in the review and 'the experience', it tends to be that the most effective number of students is about 7 - 13 per group. After this number subgroups often emerge and it becomes necessary to work with subgroups as whole groups in themselves. It is useful to draw attention to at least two related processes that limit group size. If they can be dealt with early enough they can extend the effective group size to the upper limit of about 13 students. The first process is that of a reducing face to face interaction within the group. The larger the number in the group the more limited the opportunities for sharing experience, and the less students tend to feel a sense of 'bonding' with the whole group. The second process is one of an increasing number of group members being seduced into relative passivity. The larger the number in the group the

broader the veil of anonymity provided for less assertive members, under which student commitment fades and tension increases, forming a subgroup of the 'have nots'. For these reasons the social programme makes extensive use of small group activities and in doing so draws much more on the use of particular kinds of resources rather than others. Minibuses are used rather than coaches, and staff with specialist skills are used more often and in a much more intensive way.

Section 4:

Practical Considerations

Canoeing – A Resume of What Happens

Students whet their appetites for canoeing at a slide and video show early in the term. As the date of the activity approaches a 'glossy' poster, inviting all those interested to a meeting, is put up in the common room. At this meeting canoeing groups are made up and questions are answered. Students who are tentative about participating are encouraged to talk with those students who have already decided to participate, and not look for the organiser to make too many of the decisions on their behalf. Final reminders about equipment, names and times are then advertised on the 'daily information' noticeboard.

The minibus sets off after school with a group of eight or nine students. They need little encouragement to talk about canoeing, and find that the organiser with them is as enthusiastic as they are to hear what they have to say. The organiser is particularly interested to get them to share the reasons for their participation in a new and challenging activity.

As the group arrives at the centre all the valuables are collected together, their school books are deposited under the back seats and they go in to change. They meet their instructor (a familiar face in the school), collect their equipment, help each other with it on to the grass, and take part in a safety drill. They help each other into the boats and find that it isn't like it looks on television - two out of eight capsize immediately, with the rest soon to follow.

Two hours later muddy feet and glowing faces make their way into the minibus. The students conversation is picked up by the organiser who encourages them to dwell on those points they are mentioning – Was it a challenge? What did they like about it? What terrified them? Who got the most laughs? What were those

insurmountable problems? Whose canoe must be out of shape because it kept going in circles? The students ask whether they can come again, whether there are places still available on the caving or weekend excursions, and decide to participate more in the self-selected and self-initiated activities that they discover other members of this group doing. They finally arrange a meeting place to continue the conversations later on, and make their way slowly to the front doors of their host families.

Mountaineering – A Resume of What Happens

The students are exposed to the same pre-experience process as the canoeing, where slide and video shows, along with glossy posters encourage student interest. Group tutors remind their groups of meeting times and elaborate on what students have got from mountaineering previously. At the meeting the information outlined in the social programme booklet is gone through meticulously, so that everyone can develop a realistic appreciation of the kind of experience they are about to participate in. After students have organised who is sharing a room with whom, they get together in small groups to go into the city centre, where they will hire their walking boots. These students take the responsibility for finding all the appropriate clothing, including cagoules and rucksacks, some of which they can borrow from the school.

Throughout the weekend the organiser encourages the group to communicate how it feels in 'situations' that develop. Should students have to wait in the minibus for someone who hasn't organised themselves properly, they are encouraged to let the person know of the inconvenience they have caused. This person is encouraged to share the group's concern and to become part of

the group to a greater extent by organising him/herself more effectively.

During the activity the organiser looks for opportunities to get the group working together and to help them to share a greater responsibility for the rest of the group. Regular rest stops and food breaks punctuate the day, giving students the opportunity to share the responsibility for the first aid kits, ropes and the bivouac. It is at these moments that students bathe in the experience of being here, doing this, with these people. It is also when the organiser helps the group to reflect on the hazards they have faced, and those that might yet come.

In the pub that evening twenty or so wind-chapped faces turn their conversation to girlfriends, boyfriends, life after England and how no one at home will believe what they have done. The organiser encourages students to reflect in this way and suggests that the students organise a 'reunion' evening in school where everyone can relive the experience of this weekend from the slides and photos they have taken.

Back at the guesthouse everyone starts to turn their thoughts to tomorrow morning. Clothes that have been drying are collected and the organiser lays out a map of tomorrow's walk on a table. Students crowd around, trying to find clues as to what surprises lie in store, knowing all the time that after today there can surely be nothing that is going to surprise them!

Week-long Courses

In the context of how aims are achieved special mention needs to be made of the particular advantages of the Outdoor Education Course as opposed to activities organised to fit into a normal school timetable.

To summarise:

1. Students achieve intended outcomes within the week. During two hour canoeing sessions in the term, outcomes develop more slowly and are more avoidable. On a week course it is possible to develop these outcomes in a much more intensive way. Students live with and build upon the consequences of what was felt, found out and done from first thing in the morning until last thing at night.

2. The residential setting provides a neutral environment with few reminders of school, host families, the peer group or close cultural community. It is an environment in which students feel more able to experiment, take risks and grow in self-confidence.

3. The learning process is perceived as an integrated whole with the review seen more as a natural part of the activity and less as an educational technique.

4. Living together and working together for a week provides a whole range of interaction and challenges that can be developed and understood. One example of this is cross cultural learning – a topic not discussed in this document.

I realised how important it is for me to get to know people from other countries and their way of like. I learnt a lot from living with everyone. It has influenced the way I think about other cultures.

A Swiss student

5. Students are more aware of learning as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. They notice to a greater extent how their attitude to learning is affected.

6. The outcomes of group skills, a sense of 'bonding', understanding group processes and synergy can all be developed more successfully. The development of these outcomes also improves the conditions for learning them.

Selling Social Education

A success story from the last few years has been the high level of student participation (and demand) for challenging activities. This participation has been achieved by selling the idea of social education to the students, a feature which is now a termly occurrence at the school. This selling process takes the form of a 'hands on' induction from which students are encouraged to voice their reservations and develop their own reasons for participating.

The main points emphasised by this induction phase are:

1. The activities are within everyone's ability.

2. They are safe.

3. They are a collection of opportunities provided by the school, and form an integral part of the learning experience on offer.

4. They encourage the practice of personal challenge, the development of friendships, an enthusiasm for life at the school, and so on.

5. They are an experience distinct from the routine of tourist Britain – that of shopping, discos, videos etc.

6. They are often subsidised or free.

Having a large group present helps the tutor persuade students of the value of doing these activities. The tutor builds up a positive attitude in the group by raising the group's expectations about these activities and by capitalising on the cathartic effect that is created. Within this it is possible for the tutor to encourage those students who are often highly sceptical of their own ability to participate. Once a level of anticipation has been reached students are aware that they are on to a good thing and don't want to be left out. Leaping from observer to participant is made all the more easy for students when they discover that many of the activities are small group activities with a limited number of places available.

Selling Activities

1. On the students' first day in school the Principal, Director of Studies and I introduce 'The English Experience' (an integrated approach to learning while at the school). At this meeting students are encouraged to see social activities as part of the broader educational opportunities provided by the school.

2. One evening in the first week of every term the 'soft sell' takes place. The resume below gives an indication of what is involved.

- Music, food and drink.
- Displays on free standing boards as well as walls. These displays sell glossy images of the activities as well as advertising schedules, historical information and pictorial guides.
- Library books marked at appropriate information and pictures.
- The equipment used is on display for people to look at/hold.

This equipment includes everything from rucksacks to cagoules.

- The equipment they need to get for themselves (such as walking boots) is also on display, as well as information about where in Bath to get it.
- A slide show covering each activity and weekend with narration. This show covers ideas not advertised in the social programme such as boat trips, alternative coach trips, and places to visit by car from Bath.
- Returning students relate their experiences of activities and usually endorse what they say by wanting to do them again this term.
- A video of each activity and weekend.
- Photofiles on areas that will be visited this term.
- Leaflets on areas that will be visited this term.
- Leaflets outlining what we think are the advantages of participating in challenging activities.
- The social programme booklet is referred to for each activity, as a way of helping students locate the relevant information they need.

3. There is a series of meetings within one week of the 'soft sell' evening to answer questions and to meet those who are going.

4. During the term there are slide shows of activities as and when students receive their pictures. This helps encourage those who chose not to participate, and are returning to the school, to get involved next time. It also encourages the filling up of any remaining places for the end of term activities.

5. Students are provided with a colourful social programme booklet full of useful information, part of which is designed to

make them more aware of the possibilities for pursuing their own interests while they are at the school. The students read through the booklet with the group tutor as well as with the social organiser, but in many cases they have already studied it carefully and are familiar with its contents.

The Promotions Evening

Having a promotions evening at the beginning of term has been a major factor in securing student numbers for the social activities. It used to be the case that these activities were organised on the basis of, 'Could those students interested please attend the meeting.' These activities were advertised on a notice board or by the brief appearance of the social organiser in a classroom. This put students in the peculiar situation of having to decide whether or not to participate in activities they may have had no experience of or reliable information about. Students were then left to draw on their own rather vague understanding of what the activities involved, and generally feed each other's misconceptions.

Students all too often associate hill walking with the physically hard life of military service or as an activity which is a male preserve. Ironically it is students that are initially put off participating for these kinds of reasons that benefit most from participating and most noticeably make up the majority of students in the school. It tends to be those students who do not see it as an opportunity for a display of machismo who are more inclined to look to the group to develop skills and to build their confidence in a whole variety of areas.

Having this special evening at the beginning of term with the whole school present has formed the basis for developing student interest in these particular activities. It has provided students with the information to enable them to make balanced judgements about the activities and placed them more closely and comfortably in touch with the kind of experience they might expect.

A Social Experience

Although it was originally for reasons of organisational convenience that this event took place in the evening, it has since been shown that this is the most desirable time to promote ideas to the students. Perhaps the most important reason for this has been that students have had to make an effort to turn up in their leisure time, the time when they can choose what they want to do. As a result students arrive ready to participate. They also seem more receptive and responsive to suggestions than is the case during the day. The reason they attend has only partly to do with the slide shows and excursion discussions, they attend because it is an opportunity for them to get to know other new students, using the excursions as a common basis for discussion. It is this which is capitalised upon by the organiser, developing the evening as a social event with food and drink.

The process of selling social education in school begins rather than ends with the promotions evening. For most students it is the first phase in an immersion process that continues throughout the term on an increasingly individual rather than an en masse basis.

It cross-fertilises with a similar immersion process occurring in project groups and encourages students to draw on experience to a greater extent in their learning.

Safety

There is one other consideration that is central to discussion of the practical implications of these activities – that is safety. With the responsibility of 'safety officer' on the shoulders of the organiser of these activities, concerns such as staffing ratios and the experience and skill of accompanying staff come to the fore. Activities such as canoeing are usually staffed on a ratio of about

1:7 or 2:10, reaching a maximum number of about 10 to 12 novices at any one time. Some activities such as climbing involve higher numbers of supervisors, with a belayer and last man necessary even if there should be only one student. At the other end of the spectrum hill walking with experienced leaders could take place on a ratio of about 1:12 or 2:20 depending on the leader's assessment of a number of other conditions.

Considerations about safety are heightened by the life saving role that communication plays in many of these activities. It cannot escape our notice that this is compounded by the limited language ability that some students have. It is under conditions where instructors from outside the school are working with the students that the potential for misunderstanding is exposed. For this reason all activities have someone present who has worked with the students and is aware of the kinds of confusion that can arise. Instructors who are frequently used by the school have been encouraged to join in the school's social activities on a broader front than their own specialism, and develop an appreciation of the situation students find themselves in. Passing activity organisation to 'external' instructors and agencies can never relieve the school of its final responsibility to student safety.

With respect to the school-based organiser (or accompanying tutor) there are a number of questions that need to be asked:

- Are they familiar with the sources of risk in these activities? Are they able to make accurate assessments or to rely on accurate assessments about what is real and what is apparent danger?

- Are they familiar with the demands made by these activities?, the instructors used?, and the location of the event? Are they satisfied that the demands placed on them will not make them more concerned about their own safety than that of the rest of the group? (see Langmuir: *Mountaincraft and Leadership*)

- Are they able to recognise exceptional situations and to meet

them with personal past experience rather than drawing on book answers?

With respect to the use of external instructors and agencies to pursue these activities, the following observations need to be made. There can be no doubt that possession of a qualification such as the British Canoe Union's Senior Instructor's Certificate or The Mountain Leadership Training Board's Mountain Leadership Certificate, both awarded by the appropriate national bodies, provides a guarantee of a minimum level of activity proficiency, but this is no guarantee of a person's ability to work successfully in or with groups, or to have an understanding of the social education process.

On the one hand knowledge, skills, experience (and certification) are necessary, while on the other hand professional experience and group work skills are required. Concerns over safety need also to address concerns over the activity as a learning experience. Adopting a posture that meets only some of these needs will be to undermine our responsibility to the students in the school.

Evaluation

Evaluating the success of activities which may occur for two hours every Wednesday afternoon is more difficult than in the case of the week-long courses. In the latter it is the norm for students to give feedback on behaviour and attitudes occurring within the group. Many of these skills and attitudes the 'owners' may be unaware of. The framework is set on these courses for developing and making each other aware of outcomes as they are achieved.

With the shorter activity sessions there is always the possibility that perceptions won't meet expectations (the tutor may see achievement that the learner is unaware of). It is these instances

that emphasise the importance of the tutor working within the group. In encouraging the group to value one another's observations, and in drawing on these observations regularly in a structured way with the tutor, students are able to monitor fairly accurately their own achievements. It is through working with the group, as well as on an individual basis with particular students, that these students inform themselves of their achievements and develop an appreciation and awareness of personal change.

Within the broader context of the social programme, evaluation is drawn from many sources. These include the diaries the students keep with their tutors, photographs, slides, scrapbooks, activity journals, observations of staff and students and finally the social climate of the school. These are all indications as to whether intended outcomes have been achieved and, along with intuitive judgements made by the activity tutor, of the quality of experience that has taken place.

Evaluation of these activities continues to give direction to what can be done differently and where social education might develop in the future. Such developments take account of our growing understanding of social education and its direct value for our learners; as this understanding increases, further developments will no doubt take place.

References

Csikszentmihalyi, P., *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety,*
Jossey-Bass (1975)

Ellis, M., *Why People Play,*
Prentice-Hall (1973)

Langmuir E., *Mountaincraft and Leadership,*
The Scottish Sports Council

Mortlock, C., *The Adventure Alternative,*
Cicerone (1984)

An Experiential Approach to Outdoor/Social Education with EFL Students

This report shows how out-of-class activities can be organised to give students genuinely educational insights into their own capacities and the ways in which they can relate to other people. The approach described is 'experiential', based on a principled methodology of structured learning through and from direct experience.

The *Bell* Educational Trust
Hillscross
Red Cross Lane
Cambridge CB2 2QX

Tel: (0223) 212333
Fax: (0223) 410282
Telex: 817916 BELLCO G

ISBN 1 870969 11 1